NCA
VOC FOR IOP/FN
BACKGROUNDER 1-0773 MAY 13, 1976
ROD TURNBULL/KANSAS CITY

CONTROLLING INSECTS ON AMERICA'S FARMS

ANNCR:

ONE OBVIOUS REASON THAT THE UNITED STATES IS ABLE TO EXPORT MORE FARM PRODUCTS THAN ANY OTHER COUNTRY IS THAT IT PRODUCES FAR MORE THAN IT NEEDS FOR ITS OWN PEOPLE. FROM KANSAS CITY, AGRICULTURE SPECIALIST ROD TURNBULL TALKS ABOUT SOME OF THE REASONS FOR AMERICA'S HIGH PRODUCTIVITY.

VOICE:

A VERY IMPORTANT REASON, OF COURSE, IS THE FACT IT IS A LARGE COUNTRY WITH A LOT OF GOOD FARM LAND; AND IN GENERAL, THE WEATHER IS GOOD FOR GROWING CROPS. ANOTHER REASON IS THAT THE FARMS ARE HIGHLY MECHANIZED, SO THAT EACH FARM WORKER WITH THE USE OF MACHINERY, CAN GET A LOT OF WORK DONE. THIS MEANS THAT CROPS CAN BE PLANTED ON TIME AND HARVESTED ON TIME. AMERICAN FARMERS FERTILIZE HEAVILY, BUT NOT AS MUCH AS SOME OF THE FARMERS IN EUROPE.

ONE FACTOR NOT OFTEN MENTIONED IN RELATION TO AMERICA'S BIG FARM PRODUCTION IS THE USE OF PESTICIDES TO KEEP INSECTS FROM DAMAGING OR DESTROYING CROPS. HERE, THE UNITED STATES HAS DEVELOPED A SYSTEM WHICH KEEPS FARMERS AWARE OF INSECT INVASIONS AND TELLS THEM WHAT TO DO ABOUT IT. THIS SYSTEM INCLUDES INSECT SITUATION REPORTS, WHICH ARE ISSUED WEEKLY THROUGHOUT THE GROWING SEASON BY THE COLLEGES OF AGRICULTURE IN THE VARIOUS STATES.

SOME STATES IN THE VICINITY OF KANSAS CITY IN THE MIDDLE OF THE COUNTRY HAVE ISSUED REPORTS FOR SIX WEEKS SO FAR THIS SPRING. THESE REPORTS GO PRINCIPALLY TO WHAT ARE CALLED COUNTY

EXTENSION AGENTS OR COUNTY FARM AGENTS. THE AGENTS SERVE IN EACH COUNTY OF THE STATE AS AN EXTENSION OF THE SERVICES PROVIDED BY THE STATE UNIVERSITY OR COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE. THE UNIVERSITY OR COLLEGE EXPERTS GATHER INFORMATION FROM ALL OVER EACH STATE EVERY DAY ON THE PRESENCE OF DAMAGING INSECTS. THEN, THEY REPORT ON HOW TO IDENTIFY THESE INSECTS, WHAT PESTICIDES TO USE TO ELIMINATE THEM, AND HOW TO APPLY THE CHEMICAL. THE FARMER WATCHES HIS CROPS TO SEE WHETHER ANY INSECTS ARE DAMAGING THEM; AND IF SO, HE CALLS ON HIS COUNTY AGENT -- EITHER IN PERSON OR BY TELEPHONE -- TO GET THE SPECIFIC INFORMATION THAT WILL HELP HIM CONTROL THE INSECTS.

THERE ARE MANY CHEMICALS WHICH ARE USED AS INSECT CONTROLS. THESE CHEMICALS MAY BE PURCHASED BY THE FARMER AT HIS LOCAL FARM SUPPLY STORE, LOCAL GRAIN ELEVATOR OR COOPERATIVE STORE. AS IN THE CASE OF FARM EQUIPMENT AND MACHINERY, ALL SUCH PRODUCTS ARE MANUFACTURED AND DISTRIBUTED BY PRIVATE BUSINESSES.

RIGHT NOW, FARMERS ARE BUYING CHEMICALS TO KILL, WHAT IN AMERICA ARE CALLED, ALFALFA WEEVILS IN ALFALFA HAYFIELDS, ARMY WORMS IN FIELDS OF WHEAT AND OATS, CUT WORMS AND WIRE WORMS IN FIELDS OF NEW CORN. BECAUSE OF RECENT COLD WEATHER, EVEN FROST, INSECT DAMAGE HAS BEEN MINOR, THUS FAR, BUT IT CAN BE EXPECTED TO INCREASE AS SOON AS WARM WEATHER ARRIVES TO STAY. IN MOST CASES, FARMERS WILL BE ABLE TO CONTROL DAMAGING INSECTS; AND AS A RESULT, THEY WILL HARVEST LARGER CROPS.

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